

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
October 18 & 19, 2005**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9 A.M., on October 18, 2005 in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair O'Neal, Ed Barnes, Bob Distler, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner, and Dale Stedman.

MINUTES APPROVAL

The Commission unanimously approved the meeting minutes for March 15 & 16, 2005 and April 19 & 20, 2005.

TOLLING "WORK SESSION" WITH THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Ford, Tolling Team Lead, opened the agenda item noting that the team held a conference call with Cambridge and the Department regarding progress on the study.

Lance Neumann, President Cambridge Systematics Inc., provided an overview of the status and progress of certain key elements of the study. The key issue that the Commission will need to grapple with, from a policy point of view, is the state of Washington going to move in the direction of tolling and pricing as a key systems management tool in addition to a financial and funding tool. It is recognized that we are not going to build our way out of congestion, and there are potential tremendous benefits from adding an effective capacity by managing traffic flow. He noted that the trend across the country is for a wide variety of managed lanes, managed system concepts, beginning to be explored. It's clear that Washington State is ready, in terms of the projects that Cambridge will be looking at, to begin exploring these concepts. He placed emphasis on the fact that revenue and financial implications on a tolling/pricing strategy must be looked at even when system management is a key driver. It's clear that tolling a facility may not achieve financial long-term objectives. This study and policy framework will bring answers to these questions in an integrated manner.

Jeff Buxbaum, Project Manager, Cambridge Systematics Inc., explained that creating a process that would facilitate the state's ability to make policy level decisions on if, where, when, and how to toll. He provided an overview of the state toll system action plan, explained policy drivers and potential projects, and addressed equity concerns and public attitudes and perceptions. Organizational considerations are the vision and mission; types of facilities; means of governance; financial and management operations, as part of the policy framework. He provided comparisons of HOT lanes versus HOV lanes along with finding from peer projects. He pointed out that tolling concepts rely on congestion, noting that no one is going to want to pay if there is no congestion. In summary if you need to get there on time toll lanes provide a way to get there if you are willing to pay.

David Ungeman, Texas Transportation Institute, shared that each state brings its own perspective. The public regards roads as a public good. The issue of fairness and equity in the public's opinion is when tolls are considered for supplemental/alternative financing. Primary concerns are whether or not the lanes will be affordable for everyone. He noted that tolls are an easy target for criticism.

Victor Poteat, PBS&J, provided an overview of administrative and organizational considerations. These considerations include the vision and mission of the organization, the type of facilities, means of governance, financial implications and management and operations considerations. There are several different elements of management and operations methods. Agencies address these elements differently depending on the components.

Bart Cima, IBI Group, provided an overview of technology choices and policy options. He explained that policy options and technology choices are definitely linked. An example is transponders and toll collection. Both have policy and technology implications.

David Forte, Systems Planning Manager, Urban Planning Office, WSDOT, shared in closing that there is a lot more detail coming. There will be a draft interim report presented at the December 2005 Commission meeting.

Chair O'Neal noted Representative Kilmer's presence.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Reema Griffith, Administrator, presented the Commission's 2006 meeting schedule. She requested the Commission's consideration in changing the meeting date for December 20 & 21, 2005 to December 13 & 14, 2005. Also requested is changing the November 21 & 22, 2006 to November 14 & 15, 2006, December 19 & 20, 2006 to December 12 & 13, 2006. It was also agreed to change February 21 & 22, 2006 to February 14 & 15, 2006 at the request of Commissioner Ford.

It was moved by Commissioner Distler and seconded by Commissioner Barnes to approve changing the December 2005 meeting dates, and the approval of the 2006 meeting schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Griffith provided an update on the status of the Commission's request to obtain its own domain. This request would change the Commission's web domain to wstc.wa.gov. Email address changes are being researched. She noted that the tolling study information as been added to the webpage.

Commissioners discussed public outreach processes and the Commission's webpage.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Dave Dye, Administrator, Urban Corridors and Northwest Coordination, Chris Picard, System Project Manager, Urban Planning Office, WSDOT, provided an overview regarding investment in infrastructure.

This presentation illustrates how we go about tackling the Central Puget Sound region's transportation problems. He noted that several agencies play significant roles in the Puget Sound Corridor and are working together to make complimentary investments within the region to move people, freight and goods.

Craig Stone, Urban Project Administrator, provided an overview of the state's investments in major corridors in the 2003-05 biennium, as well as RTID and Sound Transit. The perspective of urban corridors is how critical they are to the urban Puget Sound area. PSRC considers person trips, transit trips and freight when determining movement within the Puget Sound corridor. Movement patterns must be taken into consideration when linking transportation system centers, investment and the urban growth plan together.

Secretary McDonald noted that Sounder is an investment in increased rail capacity in the I-5 alternate corridor.

Mr. Stone noted that because we are so north/south oriented in the South Puget Sound area, we need east/west connectors. It is important to keep in mind that connectors help relieve congestion on main corridors. Investments in these alternate corridors add serviceable life to main corridors.

Mr. Dye emphasized that public outreach is a priority.

Secretary McDonald indicated that the WSDOT website provides a detailed project list. He commented briefly regarding spending on the transportation infrastructure at a national level. Noting that the investment has dropped substantially. He questioned the manner in which there would be a recovery.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR THE "ROUTE JURISDICTION TRANSFER" PROGRAM

Steve Gorcester, Director, Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), indicated that TIB would like to discontinue route jurisdiction transfers and is proposing that the Commission assume the responsibility. This process is appropriately compatible with the Commission's other responsibilities, in particular designating state highways. Route transfers must be agreed upon by both WSDOT and the local government involved. If an agreement cannot be reached a dispute resolution process takes place. He explained that because of TIB's close working relationship with local governments and WSDOT there have been occasion when relationships were strained. The Commission would hear the transfer request, make a determination, and then forward to the Legislature for the final transfer decision. He committed TIB's assistance to the Commission in the route transfer process.

Commissioner's expressed concern regarding the availability of staffing to handle the transfer and or dispute process.

FREIGHT MOBILITY VIDEO

Andy Fegley, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, presented a video regarding freight mobility within Washington.

He shared that the video documentary was produced as an effort to provide public outreach. Copies of the video are available upon request through FMSIB.

RENAMING THE MEGLER REST AREA “DISMAL NITCH”

Judy Lorenzo, Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Liaison, WSDOT, presented Resolution 673 – renaming the Megler Safety Rest Area to Dismal Nitch Safety Rest Area. The request to rename Megler Safety Rest Area was prompted by Congress establishing three sites in Washington State creating our nations newest national park. There is strong local support for this renaming.

It was moved by Commissioner Stedman and seconded by Commissioner Barnes to adopt Resolution 673 renaming the Megler Safety Rest Area to Dismal Nitch Safety Rest Area in commemoration of the Lewis & Clark Bi-centennial. The motion was unanimously approved.

EAGLE HARBOR MAINTENANCE YARD PLANS AND BAINBRIDGE TERMINAL PROJECT

Russ East, Director, Terminal Engineering, WSF, provided an overview of long-range planning and systemwide growth expectations focusing on South and Central Sound (Kitsap County).

Laura Aradanas, Terminal Project Manager, WSF, provided an update regarding the Bainbridge Terminal plan. She explained that key structural components of the Bainbridge Terminal need to be replaced in order to provide safety and circulation improvements.

Lisa Parriott, Marine Project Engineer, WSF, provided an update regarding long-range plans for the Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility. She noted that this facility project location was chosen because it would meet specific needs, based on three separate studies, of WSF for the maintenance of ferries.

PROJECT FUNDING ADJUSTMENT PROCESS AND COMMISSION’S ROLE

Greg Selstead, Director, Project Control and Reporting Office, provided a brief history of project control and funding adjustments. He noted that as individual projects progress circumstances will sometimes dictate that adjustments be made to spending schedules. Some adjustments are administrative while others may be for expenditure timing reasons within a broader project schedule or critical starts and possible impacts on completion dates. The Department will bring proposed transfers to the Commission on a quarterly basis. He iterated that these adjustments are dedicated to LEAP list projects.

Commissioner Distler requested that at the time quarterly adjustments requests are made to the Commission the Department should provide not only the current adjustment request, but a cumulative total to date. This would allow the Commission a better feel for the progression of project adjustments.

PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD

Paul Locke, citizen shared reasons why he supports Initiative 912.

John Waldo, citizen shared his concerns regarding the location of the Eagle Harbor Maintenance facility.

COMMISSIONER / TEAM UPDATES

Commissioner Barnes provided an update regarding the Rail Study Team. He noted that the scope of work is ready for release. He indicated that there has been a tremendous amount of interest in the study.

Commissioner Distler shared that the Passenger-Only Task Force is putting together policy recommendations governing passenger-only ferry service. He noted that there have been extraordinary issues that have made the process move slower than expected. Another major endeavor currently underway is the ferry tariff review for May 1, 2006.

Commissioner Forner provided an update regarding the status of the Public/Private Partnership team. She emphasized that the team is currently discussing budget, rule and policy issues for the program.

Commissioner Stedman provided a brief update regarding his meetings with the RTPO/MPO's around the state. He shared that all of the visits were positive with a lot of feedback.

Commissioner Distler noted that he visited with several RTPO/MPO's around the state. He also noted that the visits were positive. He shared that congestion relief and preservation were a primary concern.

Chair O'Neal noted that his visits with RTPO/MPO's were interesting and productive.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m., on October 19, 2005.
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAN O'NEAL, Chair

DICK FORD, Vice-Chair

EDWARD BARNES, Member

VACANT

ELMIRA FORNER, Member

ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

DALE STEDMAN, Member

DOUGLAS MACDONALD, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Administrator

DATE OF APPROVAL